

Dear Oregonian or Interested Party:

Oregon's rural communities cannot afford another 20 years of gridlock in our federal forests. Without a new path forward, mills will continue to disappear, forest jobs will be outsourced, counties will be pushed off the budgetary cliff, and forest health will continue to decline.

During a time when it's particularly hard to find common ground in public policy, Rep. Greg Walden, Rep. Kurt Schrader, and I have achieved a balanced forest health and jobs plan — in a uniquely Oregon way. **After months of hard work and negotiation, we are pleased to present a discussion draft of the bipartisan “O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act.”**

As a bipartisan coalition, we have worked through our differences to forge a plan that would create thousands of new jobs in Oregon's forested communities, ensure the health of federal forests for future generations, and provide long-term funding certainty for Oregon's rural schools, roads, and law enforcement agencies.

Federal support payments to rural and forested communities, commonly known as “county payments,” that helped support rural Oregon counties for over a decade expired on October 1.

Absent a long-term solution, diminishing county payments will have serious consequences for Oregon families and businesses. A recent Oregon State University study found that without county payments, Oregon's rural counties will shed between 3,000 and 4,000 jobs. Oregon business sales will drop an estimated \$385 million to \$400 million. And counties will lose \$250 million to \$300 million in revenues.

For counties already near the financial cliff and facing depression-like unemployment, this could be the final blow. In fact, a few counties in our districts may soon call for a public safety emergency and will be forced to eliminate most state-mandated services – including services that help the neediest citizens in our communities.

This should alarm all Oregonians, even those who do not live in rural communities. Failing counties will have both budgetary and quality of life consequences for the entire state. Vital county services would be severely restricted or altogether disappear. Counties will continue to release offenders and close jail beds. Pot-holed roads and structurally deficient bridges will be neglected. And already underfunded rural schools will be devastated.

Given the serious fiscal crisis our forested communities face, we believe a new approach is necessary to create jobs, help stabilize Oregon's rural communities, and better manage our forests.

Please take a moment to review the Discussion Draft, a Section-by-Section analysis of the draft bill, and the Myths and Facts documents below. After carefully reviewing our proposal, we encourage you to offer thoughtful, constructive, and specific comments in the space below.

The O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act at a glance:

Creates Jobs for Oregonians and Revitalizes Local Economies

- Creates thousands of new jobs in Oregon's rural communities, according to the Oregon Forests Resources Institute.
- Continues the prohibition on exporting unprocessed logs from Federal lands. In order to preserve and expand Oregon's manufacturing base, imposes penalties on businesses that violate the law and send family-wage jobs overseas.
- Allows for permanent timber production primarily on lands that have been previously harvested, ensuring a sustainable level of timber and forest products from federal lands to maintain and create jobs in the local timber industry.

- Geographically disperses timber production on the O&C Trust lands and mandates long and short timber rotation ages to meet the needs and capabilities of mills throughout western Oregon.

Brings Financial Stability to Rural Oregon Counties

- Provides forested counties in western Oregon with a sustainable and more predictable level of revenues in perpetuity to support essential county services like law enforcement, healthcare, schools, and transportation.
- Reduce counties' dependence on uncertain federal support payments in favor of a long-term solution that allows them to return to the tradition of self-reliance that embodies the best traditions of our state.

Protects Oregon Treasures

- Protects 90,000 acres of Oregon forests as wilderness and adds 150 miles of Oregon rivers to the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act.
- Transfer more than 1 million acres of mature and old growth forests from the Bureau of Land Management to the Forest Service and provides the first ever legislative protection for old growth on O&C Lands.
- Maintains federal ownership of the land and details strict management guidelines for Trust lands to ensure sustained yield and to protect clean water and terrestrial and aquatic values.

Endorsements

U.S. Representative Peter DeFazio

U.S. Representative Greg Walden

U.S. Representative Kurt Schrader

Oregon House of Representatives

Oregon Senate

Oregon State Sheriffs Association

League of Oregon Cities

Ted Wheeler, Oregon State Treasurer

Clackamas County

Columbia County

Coos County

Curry County

Douglas County

Jackson County

Josephine County

Klamath County

Lane County

Linn County

Marion County

Polk County

Tillamook County

Washington County

Yamhill County

Eugene Chamber of Commerce

[O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act Bill Text](#)

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[O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act Section-by-Section](#)

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[O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act Myths/Facts](#)

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[O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act: Certainty for Counties One-Pager](#)

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[O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act: Sustainable Forest Management One-Pager](#)

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[O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act: Conservation Victories One-Pager](#)

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[O&C Trust, Conservation, and Jobs Act Draft Maps](#)

[Click here for Public Comments.](#)